



Larwood Academy Trust

Executive Headteacher: Mr Sean Trimble | B.Ed (Hons) MA NPQH |

Chair of Trustees: Cllr Sandra Barr | B.Sc (Hons) Dip.soc.pol |

WEBB RISE, STEVENAGE, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG1 5QU

Email: admin@larwood.herts.sch.uk

Telephone: 01438 236333

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Larwood School

Brandles School

Deputy Headteacher: Mr Pierre Van Der Merwe | BA, NPQH |

Headteacher: Mr David Pearce | BA (Hons), PGCE, NPQH |

Friday, 8th January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I had hoped to not be in the position of having to write to you about Coronavirus on a weekly basis again. However, we are where we are, and I think it's vital to keep good communications during such times. Staff are using email, phone call and Teams to keep the lines of communication open.

The virus has clearly mutated and spread at an alarming rate and as shared with you previously, rates for our area are rising steeply at the moment. Our stance of 'do no harm' is incredibly difficult right now due to the concerning increases in infection across the country and in our locality. This always transmits to more people in hospital over time and we continue to try and ensure this is avoided for us all, as best we can. Having said all of the above, the experience this time of lockdown when compared to last time is not going to be the same with our educational provision.

This time is different!

I know it may not feel like it, but this time and this lockdown is different! We assumed that this would happen from a school perspective. Therefore, much of the autumn term has been spent setting up for and rehearsing opportunities for online learning. It is also different in the following ways:

- As a school, we already have a plan of how we move on, when safe to do so, based on our previous experiences.
- Staff are better prepared for this situation. Last time just about all of our efforts such the YouTube videos were new. Now staff have had training in Teams and pupils have also been supported to use the technology. We rolled out our online learning on Tuesday 5th Jan and we are 'up and running'
- We are not waiting for the DFE to provide laptops. We will send them out if there is a genuine need for it. Just let us know and we will ensure you have access to Chrome Book if your child does not have a device at home.
- Lessons are live! The best thing about this is it creates opportunities for pupils to come together, learn together and chat. On Tuesday, there were some wonderful examples of how this had worked. This point is really important in terms of attending, and enabling social interaction for our pupils.
- We can still provide some 'one to one' learning opportunities where that is helpful for your son/daughter. Again, on Tuesday I am aware that technical glitches caused some issues but some pupils had their lesson later with the teacher to help them not miss out.

Registered office:

Larwood School, Webb Rise, Stevenage, Hertfordshire. SG1 5QU, UK. Company Number: 10359418



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- Although attendance at school in a physical sense is not compulsory, ***I fully expect pupils to attend the online learning, or to be completing work in some way. The only exception to this is if you have been in contact with us and there are some circumstances that mean this is impossible or would cause major issues for you.*** As always, if your child is unwell then they need to concentrate on getting better first and foremost.
- Points allocated to pupils will continue based on attendance and trying their best with work set. Medals, shirts etc. will still be awarded even if we have to deliver them!

Access to online learning.

The Department for Education released information yesterday in relation to support on this matter. It is all very well having the devices but you clearly need the broadband access to make them work. If you do not then please contact school (as per instructions already sent out. Just in case I have copied the information below again:

Who can get help?

Schools, trusts and local authorities can request mobile data increases for children and young people who:

- do not have fixed broadband at home
- cannot afford additional data for their devices
- are experiencing disruption to their face-to-face education

Children with access to a mobile phone on one of the following networks might be able to benefit:

- Three
- Smarty
- Virgin Mobile
- EE
- Tesco Mobile
- Sky Mobile

Other providers may join the scheme at a later stage.

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When help is available?

Schools, trusts and local authorities can request mobile data increases when schools report a closure or have pupils self-isolating.

They can also make requests for children who cannot attend school face-to-face because:

- they're clinically extremely vulnerable
- restrictions prevent them from going to school

How to request a mobile data increase?

For each request, we need to know:

- the name of the account holder
- the number of the mobile device
- the mobile network of that device (for example Three)

Please email admin@larwood.herts.sch.uk or call us with the information above and we will pass this on as soon as we have it.

Support for you, your family and your child over the coming days and weeks.

Please note that we really do understand the anxiety and difficulties that this situation creates again. There is so many unknowns for so many people. This can affect us all in different ways, and at different times. I know that during recent times I have experienced a range of emotions for all sorts of reasons, that included worry, frustration, anger (at the slow response by Ministers, and by the confusing information being shared with the country) and that gut wrenching feeling of 'here we go again.' If your child, you and your family need additional support during these times, please do talk to us. Mrs Ford continues to be available to offer online and can also offer advice of where to contact other support groups if this is helpful.

One of our strengths as a close knit and caring community is that we know each other well enough to be honest, appropriate and helpful when things get tricky. Please keep talking to us on whatever way works for you-email/phone call/Teams etc.

Yours Sincerely

S D Trimble
Executive Headteacher

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